
Professional of the Year Award

The VNLA Professional of the year for 2011 has been actively engaged in the horticulture industry since first receiving his B.S. at Georgia Tech in 1973. After working in the industry for more than fifteen years, 11 of those as the chief horticulturist for the largest landscape contractor in Northern Florida, this person returned to Virginia Tech in 1993 as an associate professor of horticulture. After obtaining his PhD from Cornell University in Urban Horticulture, he focused much of his professional research on tree establishment and root growth and has authored more than 60 manuscripts in scientific journals, along with numerous other publications. He has also advised more than a dozen graduate students on their research, theses, and dissertations.

His dedication to the horticulture industry has led to many positive transformations including the creation of two horticultural research positions at Hampton Roads AREC in Virginia Beach and the Alson H. Smith Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Winchester. While working feverishly on the research side, he has never lost sight of his number one goal at Virginia Tech, to educate students. His actions speak louder than words. He recently created the Horticulture Advisory Board for the department to ensure that all his students are receiving the knowledge they need to be successful in the industry. Not only has

he increased enrollment in the department, but he has increased industry involvement as well creating a very engaged department. He is also member of the American Society for Horticultural Science, the International Society of Arboriculture, and the Arboriculture Research and Education Academy.

So, please join me in recognizing Dr. Roger Harris, Head of Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture as the VNLA Professional of the Year!